



Sophomore Albert Coker returns a punt during the Bulldogs' 55-31 Saturday night victory against Upper Iowa. Coker caught four passes for 56 yards and a touchdown. Led by junior quarterback Matt Tichic, the 'Dogs' passing game accounted for 536 yards.

Jackson Groves/Index

FOOTBALL | Bulldogs win home opener 55-31, enter MIAA play with undefeated 2-0 record

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"They were giving us one-on-one coverage on the outside guys, and our receivers were just making plays for us," Tichic said. Playing in front of 4,300 fans, the largest crowd at Stokes Stadium since October 1997, Tichic and the Bulldog offense had little trouble staking an early lead. The 'Dogs scored on six of eight first-half possessions, including 24 points in the second quarter.

Senior Jake Cunningham and sophomore Phil Kenney had first-quarter rushing touchdowns before Tichic found Emokpae, Coker

and Blue on touchdown passes in the second quarter. Sophomore kicker Mickey Masucci put the exclamation point on the first half, nailing a 40-yard field goal to send the 'Dogs into the locker room with a 28-point lead. Masucci converted two of three field goal attempts on the night.

The win against Upper Iowa completes a 180-degree turnaround from the Bulldogs' non-conference performance last season. In 2006, the 'Dogs lost their two non-conference games by a collective total of 29 points.

But the Bulldogs took care of business

against their non-conference foes — who combined for a 9-13 record last year — this season and will begin MIAA play 1 p.m. Saturday, at the University of Central Missouri (1-1).

"Our [non-conference] competition probably hasn't been as good as the couple of teams we played last year," Currier said. "We'll see more [competition] as we keep playing this year. But the bottom line is, winning games is all that matters. It doesn't matter who you beat. You're 2-0. And that's more momentum for us to take into conference play."

DEFENSE | Football team allows 62 points and 950 yards through two weeks

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time we were cracking those guys and knocking their quarterback down," Currier said. "We played a lot faster and much more physical than the first game."

The Peacocks rushed for 215 yards, led by Hicks' nearly nine yards per carry. Opponents are averaging more than six yards per run this season.

"There are so many parts to the puzzle," Currier said. "... Defensively, 11 guys have to play as a unit. So if one guy messes up, it makes everybody look bad."

In addition to Hicks, the Upper Iowa offense also featured wide receiver Dwayne Croker, a 2006 Honorable Mention All-American.

"They have a bunch of skill players that make a lot of plays," senior defensive back Jesse Cooper said.

Although the defense struggled against the run, Cooper, Thabuteau and the rest of the secondary contained Croker and others in the Peacock receiving contingent. Croker caught five passes for 107 yards, but Bulldog defensive backs jarred several passes out of his hands with firm hits and held Upper Iowa quarterback Kevin Linnell to a 44 percent completion percent-

age. Nine of Linnell's passes were broken up by a defensive back.

More importantly, three different Bulldogs intercepted passes, which brought the team's total up to five on the season. The purple and white had only seven interceptions all of last season.

Currier said the team tweaked its zone coverage strategy prior to the season, and the defensive backs are trying to read the quarterback better.

"It's something that we really have talked about a lot, that we were not getting enough interceptions," Currier said. "And we felt that we have some good players that should be able to get them."

All three of the interceptions were converted into scores last Saturday, proving the defense has had a hand in the 'Dogs' offensive success.

If the defense not only continues to force turnovers, but also finds a way to limit its yardage and points allowed, it could become much more of a positive factor in MIAA play and take some pressure off the Bulldog offense.

"Just like it was last year — the offense will pick up the defense if they need it, and I'm sure they'll pick us up somewhere along the road," junior quarterback Matt Tichic said.



Adam Kabins/Index

Senior midfielder Emily Newsham fires the ball downfield during the women's soccer team's 2-1 victory against UNO. It was the first time the Bulldogs defeated the Mavericks since 2004.

SOCCER | Women come from behind to defeat the Mavericks 2-1

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play, Omaha senior forward Brandie Beale made a lot of contact with Roark. Roark appeared to have shoved Beale, and Beale fell. Even though there was mutual contact and Beale already had been warned, the referee awarded Beale a penalty kick without issuing Roark a yellow card.

"There was some contact made. I wouldn't say anymore than normal. She fell, and the ref gave her the call," Roark said.

Cannon said he disagreed with the call, but he thought the play could've been avoided.

"I would say we need to be smarter about being baited into the push," Cannon said. "The referee should know better."

Beale scored on the ensuing penalty kick. She shot to Roark's left, and even though Roark guessed correctly, she couldn't come up with it, due to the shot's placement near the left post.

The goal deflated Truman a bit. They maintained more ball control than Omaha, but they couldn't do anything with it.

"I think we played really

well until the PK. It was a pretty even game," Cannon said. "After the PK, it was still a pretty even game, but we started playing more into their hands."

Overall, Cannon said he was impressed with how his team responded after halftime.

Sophomore midfielder Katie Reuck tied the game with her first goal of the season in the 56th minute, assisted by junior fullback Kim Wolff.

"We defended well," Cannon said. "We were smart in our attack. And obviously the first goal changes the momentum. We came out strong and were rewarded pretty early. I think that energized us."

Less than 10 minutes later, Truman struck again. Sophomore midfielder Isabel Gaeta happened to be near the box when junior midfielder Brigitte Pohren kept the ball in. It came right to Gaeta, who tapped it inside the left post.

The bench was strong again for Truman. They subbed forwards and midfielders in and out fairly frequently. The real story was the defense.

"We kind of put our backs out there on an island, and much credit to them," Cannon said. "It was three [backs] against three [forwards]. They played 90 minutes."

With about 15 minutes remaining, Omaha started to put on some pressure.

"[At] the end of the game, we were getting a little tired. They were pressing for a goal," Cannon said. "We dropped [senior midfielder] Rachael Schmidt back to sweep the last five minutes."

Roark came up with a few big saves in the game but none bigger than a sliding stop she made on a breakaway with about five minutes to play.

"We needed saves to preserve the win, and that makes them bigger," Roark said.

Cannon said this win was important but that they can't afford to relax.

"We know this is a great win, but we need to use it as a stepping stone into conference play because conference won't be much easier," he said. "We need to get off to a good start this weekend."

CROSS COUNTRY | Danna Kelly and Grace DelNero finish first and second at season-opening Miner Invitational in Rolla, Mo.

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apart a little bit, but overall I was pretty happy with how they started off. The second pack never [really] formed up — that's one thing we have to work at because they're going to be important to try to knock off some fifth runners later on down the year."

Gorman also stressed the importance of pack running and said that his pack ran well together.

"All four of us ran through the mile and half as a solid block, and then we had the other pack right behind that," Gorman said. "If you see four people from the same team pass you at the mile marker, ... it's intimidating."

Kelly and DelNero form the leading pack for the women, with a second pack behind them. Coach John Cochrane

said that the second pack did a good job of staying together. Kelly and DelNero try to stay together for the first two miles, which DelNero said they accomplished.

Kelly and DelNero both have experience at the higher levels, which is a good thing for the younger woman runners. DelNero, a senior standing, but a junior on the team because she redshirted a year, is the lone runner left from the 2004 team that placed 20th at nationals. Kelly has been to the national championships in track. Because of this, Cochrane said, the underclassmen don't have to take leadership positions.

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Bob Gorman
Freshman

"[The freshmen] don't have to take those roles," Cochrane said. "They just have to start moving up and getting closer to them along the way. The week before we had run an intrasquad road race, and we did much better than we did that weekend. We have a long way to go here."

Both teams will have to work hard for the Southern Stampede meet this weekend in Joplin. The meet will feature over 300 runners compared to just 80 this past weekend. Pack running will be even more essential to their success.

WEEKEND | Truman teams' performances reaffirm love of sports

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They were 2-8 in the 10 previous contests with the school.

The Mavericks knocked them out of the NCAA tournament three years in a row from 2002-2004.

The Bulldogs had never beaten the Mavs as the home team.

Things did not look good for the women's third victory of the season. But, my friends, that is why they play the game.

The Mavs jumped out to an early lead on a penalty kick goal, and it seemed like history would continue to favor the team from Nebraska.

But it didn't. Junior goalie Emily Roark stood tall in the net and turned away the rest of the Mavs attacks and sophomores Isabel Gaeta and Katie Rueck scored to propel the Bulldogs to a 2-1 win.

The women's huge win wasn't the only story from the weekend that reaffirmed my love of sports. Saturday, at a packed Stokes Stadium, junior quarterback Matt

Tichic had the best game I've ever seen in person.

Under the new lights Tichic looked like he was a man playing among boys, dodging would-be tacklers and throwing lasers around the field to a plethora of different receivers.

Tichic made it look easy.

The best play of the game came with five minutes left in the second quarter. With his much-maligned offensive line giving him what seemed like all day to throw, Tichic scrambled to his right and fired a perfect strike to a streaking Albert Coker for a score and a 28-3 lead. When I saw his arm move back to throw I thought he was throwing it away to avoid a sack. The play left me speechless.

Tichic went on to complete more passes and rack up an impressive 493 yards passing - a new MIAA and school record. Plus, with his 23 yards rushing, he set a school record with 516 yards of total offense.

Another great moment

from the weekend was the women's cross country team's total domination of the Miner Invitational on Saturday.

Conventional wisdom said the women would not be good this year without their star runner from last year, Jacquie Faust. Conventional wisdom would have been wrong.

Juniors Danna Kelly and Grace DelNero finished one-two at the Invite. Kelly finished 11 seconds in front of her teammate and 46 seconds ahead of the third place finisher.

Kelly and DelNero weren't the only ones to shine. The Bulldog women dominated the field of 77. The five other members of the team took sixth, 10th, 11th, 12th and 15th.

Not bad for the team picked in the MIAA pre-season poll to finish sixth in the eight-team conference.

These three performances — a team knocking off a rival, an individual performance for the ages and a team overcoming expectations — are why I love sports.



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